

METROPOLITAN COMMISSION OF SEWERS.

A COURT was held on the 14th inst., the Hon. Fred. Byng, in the chair. On the recommendation of the General Purposes Committee, that works of emergency in the Surrey and Kent divisions (the whole being pipe drainage to the amount of 1,950*l.*) be adopted, Mr. Chadwick expressed his opinion that stoneware pipes could be obtained from a person (whose name was not heard), at a great saving on the present cost.—The Clerk said that Mr. Phillips had made a report that experiments were in contemplation for making cement pipes, to supersede the use of stone pipes, which would be a great saving.

Mr. Leslie inquired what difference would be made in the price of cement pipes? What sort of cement had been used?

The Surveyor said the price would not be above half that of stoneware. No cement had been used at present, as the moulds were not ready. When they were, they proposed to use every kind of cement, with concrete and dry rubbish. These pipes would be made in three feet lengths with sockets.

The Chairman said immediate measures were pressing for the health of the population of the district. The condition of the population in this district was truly frightful, and demanded an instant remedy.

Dr. Southwood Smith said he knew from his own knowledge that in these districts fever and cholera existed to a great extent.—Mr. Broderip deprecated the saving of a few pounds in such a case on the ground of economy. Economy was very good in its way, but economy here was not to be bought with delay.—In answer to a question, the Surveyor said he had laid down a twelve inch pipe in a most offensive drain at Hickman's Polly, Bermoudey, which before this contained soil upwards of 3 feet in depth. It was now quite clear and free from any offensive matter.

Mr. Bullar then moved that the works proposed by the General Purposes Committee, be agreed to, the surveyors making such modification from time to time in the expense, as may be deemed expedient. Motion agreed to.

There appears to be still a legal difficulty to prevent the issue of the commission under the new act.

Miscellaneous.

GRIMSBY DOCKS.—The first division, as it may be called, of this undertaking, has now been brought to a close, by the completion of the embankment, wharfs, and coffer-dam, which, together forming a continuous line of a mile and a half in length, enclose one hundred and thirty acres of land between high and low water, now reclaimed from the tide. Some difficulties arose in the construction of one of the piled wharfs, owing to the weakness of the foundation at that spot—a soft silty clay; but they have been entirely surmounted. The coffer-dam, which is fifteen hundred feet in length, and which stands in a very exposed position, consists of a triple row of whale sheet-piling, backed at close intervals by buttresses or counterparts of sheet-piling, the first application of the kind, it is believed, to the purposes of a coffer-dam. Minor improvements in the system of bolting have also been introduced. The piling was principally driven by means of two stationary steam engines, giving motion to winding drums, whence the chains were led to ordinary pile-engines, which were sometimes removed four or five hundred feet from the source of power. For the interior constructions forming the second division of this undertaking, considerable preparations have been made. The works to be performed comprise two locks, one of which will be sufficiently large to receive any vessel afloat, and a dock of nearly thirty acres. For these a considerable quantity of material is already provided and prepared, steam mortar-mills are erected, and various other provisions made. The consulting engineer is Mr. Rendel, and the resident engineer, Mr. Adam Smith.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.—The great corporation of London have at length agreed, at the very last sitting before St. Thomas's-day, to cause their property at Lambeth to have a communication with the common sewers. For more than twenty years they have required their tenants to pay their sewers rate, without their having any drains whatever. Can we wonder at typhus and cholera breaking out at Lambeth? What have their bridge-masters and surveyors been about? If they were only paid for the work they do this inquiry need not be made.—A SURFER.

PROJECTED WORKS.—Advertisements have been issued for tenders by 3rd January, for the erection of the new church of St. Paul, Derby; by 22nd January, for the entire completion of the Tyne Docks of the York, Newcastle, and Berwick Railway Company, with works connected therewith; by 26th inst., for the supply of twenty-five new goods-waggons for the South-Eastern Railway Company; by 26th also, for the supply of about 420 tons of cast-iron pipes, 48 inches in diameter, and 150 tons 24 inches in diameter, for the Manchester Corporation Waterworks; by a date not specified, for about 60 tons of cast-iron gas-piping for the Southport Improvement Act Commissioners; and by 2nd proximo, for the execution of the boilers, pipes, and fittings connected with the baths and washhouses near the Yorkshire Stingo Tavern.

WAVENDON CHURCH.—It will have been seen by a notice in our pages, that the parish church of Wavendon (misprinted Waverdon) is about to be rebuilt. The following notes of the old building, as it is about to be pulled down, may not be uninteresting. It consists of nave, with aisles, clerestory, and south porch, tower at the west end, and chancel; general style very early Decorated: the piers and arches to the nave are very good, and by an unusual arrangement of the pews, which are all confined to the aisles, their full proportions are well seen. There are some very excellent two-light windows in the north aisle, and one of three lights at the east end of the same, equally good: the south aisle, the roof (which is of oak, with carved tops), and also the tower, are good Perpendicular. The chancel is now being rebuilt under the direction of Mr. Butterfield: if this be a faithful restoration, there was a fine decorated arcade on the south side. Assistance is much required in the other parts of the church, as the aisles are fast falling away from the nave.

FLEET DITCH.—From a paragraph in the London papers, it appears that about ten or more people residing at Gillingham, in Kent, have fallen victims to the Asiatic cholera. Their residences were on the banks of a creek, continually being stirred up by the tides. Now, at the last visit of the cholera in London, more genuine cases occurred on the line of the Fleet Ditch than in any other part of the metropolis; and it does seem to me that the attention of the Commissioners of Sewers might be humanely directed to that abomination, the existence of which (nearly wholly uncovered from Peter-street to Ray-street, Clerkenwell, a distance of 1,000 feet) is not known to the public in general. I feel assured, that if you can cause the ditch to be covered you will add another laurel to the many you have already gained. In addition to the Fleet Ditch being always open, and the soil and filth from the north of the metropolis always passing through it, the most obnoxious trades are carried on, and the whole neighbourhood is poisoned by continued stenches.—W. P. G.

THE NEW STATUE OF THE DUKE.—The marble statue executed by Mr. Milner has been placed on its granite pedestal in the Tower, between Tintors' Gate and the White Tower. The figure is about 8 feet high and the pedestal 10 feet. The drapery is chiefly a cloak with cord and tassels.

THE BENEVOLENT FUND OF THE INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS.—We felt great astonishment at the result of the meeting on the 11th inst.—viz., "that the fund is to be distributed by the treasurer of the Artists' General Benevolent Institution,"—than which, I think, a greater mistake could not have been made, inasmuch as it will prevent the members of the profession taking that interest in it which they properly should do. I could not attend the meeting, but I understood that the intention was to place the fund under the control and distribution of the council of the Institute, and it would then with certainty have the support of all the members of that body. Besides, one great object in having funds for benevolent purposes attached to the different professional societies, is, that relief may be rendered to deserving persons in a private and delicate manner, otherwise the unfortunate may as well apply to one of the various societies for the general relief of the unfortunate, to which most of us subscribe, or to their parish authorities. CHAS. LEE, Fellow.

SOCIETY OF ARTS.—On the 6th inst., Mr. N. Holmes read a paper on the present state of electricity as applied to telegraphs. After giving a short history of the subject prior to Volta's discovery of the voltaic current in 1800, overcoming the difficulties presented by the use of free electricity, he dated the progressive advancement of the science from Orsted's grand discovery in 1819, of the rotatory influence exercised by an electric current upon a magnetic needle, which was immediately followed by that of Arago's, in the formation of the electro-magnet. The introduction of the telegraph into this country took place in the year 1837, at which time many persons were engaged in the practical carrying out of the idea; but it was not until Professor Wheatstone's researches in the more theoretical portion of the science that the requisite perfection was obtained. After alluding to the numerous variety of printing telegraphs and alarms, Mr. Holmes exhibited his new signal, in place of the old clock-work bell, producing the sound by means of an air-whistle.

THE CHICHESTER COMPETITION.—Sir: We are indebted to you for the letters which have already appeared on this subject. I, also, sent for particulars, and at the foot of my communication asked the following queries:—1. Do the Committee intend giving one or more premiums? If so, the amount. 2. Will the author of the selected design be employed to carry out the works at the usual commission? These questions, Mr. Editor, I think you will say were fair; mark, then, the reply. "With regard to the payment, the Committee have not come to any decision about it; I think (think) they will enter into some arrangement with the successful competitor as to the amount (1*l.*) of commission for which he will undertake the superintendence, &c." Lucky dog the successful competitor! He ought to go down on his knees and thank the committee for the blessings intended.—SURFER.

SAWING TIMBER IN CURVES AND LEVELS.—In a case at Nisi Prius, the Queen against Mr. Julius Smith, instituted on the ground that the Crown was deceived in granting him a patent for an alleged invention of a foreigner, such invention not being new, Mr. Justice Wightman, in summing up, stated, that "on 3rd June, 1843, Mr. Smith took out letters patent for certain improvements in machinery for sawing wood. The claim was for mounting the saw in an interior frame, supported within a saw gate, and enabled to slide laterally, and of guiding the saw with a fork guide lever. The most complicated part was the bevelling, which was contrived by three processes—the sawing process, the process for turning the log, and the process determining the angles to be given to the levelling." The judge then left twelve questions to the jury, who gave such answers that the verdict was directed to be entered for the Crown on several of the issues, and for the defendants on the remainder; the latter with leave for the Crown to move to enter a verdict. Scientific evidence had been adduced on both sides, and working models exhibited in court.

CHARCOAL AS A DEODORIZER.—The Irish Amelioration Society seem to contemplate the extensive manufacture of peat charcoal for this as well as other purposes,—"peat charcoal, so prepared (by a patent process), having on many trials been found to be a most complete deodorizer, immediately by admixture converting feculent matter into a dry inodorous and portable manure, of highly fertilizing properties, and fit for immediate use." They propose selling it "at a price which will allow of its being used for deodorizing the sewage matter of London and other large towns." Charcoal is a well-known deodorizer. It seems probable that the dry inodorous portable manure, proposed to be manufactured by a "French Count and his engineers," at Birmingham, on terms with the Town Council, would have been thus prepared.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY.—Mr. Cockerell will commence his course of lectures of architecture, to the students of the Royal Academy, on Thursday, the 4th of January. The following gentlemen have been admitted students in architecture:—Messrs. John Robinson, Charles Nathaniel Williams, Francis Freeman Thorne, Francis George Widdows, Henry Simpson-Legg, Edward Middleton Barry, George Payne, and William Francis Gomp.